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# African Peasants on the Move. Turmoil between Global Dynamics, Migration and Food Insecurity

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**AFRICAN PEASANTS ON THE MOVE.  
TURMOIL BETWEEN GLOBAL DYNAMICS,  
MIGRATION AND FOOD INSECURITY**

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This issue presents some of the publications resulting from the research project “African societies facing global dynamics: Turbulences between external intervention, migration, and food insecurity” [*Dynamics*]<sup>1</sup>. The underlying idea was to investigate contemporary global dynamics faced by African societies, how they interact with internal processes of change and these societies’ responses to these pressures.

The contributions address the key issues raised in the *Dynamics* research project in different ways. They focus on an analysis of migration (internal as well as international), agricultural transformation and food (in)security in different societies and locations. They also explore the links between them and their inter-relations with global dynamics. The work was based on case studies conducted in Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe (STP), Cape Verde and Senegal. An additional contribution from Mozambique was also included as it addressed the central issues of the project.

Although this research project in itself can only address a few aspects of this complex set of interactions and highlight some of the key issues at play in specific case studies, the project is part of a long-term investigation about the dynamics of change in African agrarian societies which contemplates a wider range of issues.

## How do global dynamics interact with African societies?

The various dimensions of global dynamics addressed in this issue include food price variations, climate change and direct external interventions of various kinds. In development cooperation, for instance, many actors try to change the internal dynamics of African societies through external interventions aiming at promoting development. However, because their planning is based on linear causality models, external intervention very often has unexpected negative results, causing conflicts and turmoil instead of the expected positive change. In addition, they do not consider the cumulative effects of all the external interventions that are affecting specific societies.

It is difficult to predict what will happen in African societies as a result of global dynamics, which originate mainly in industrial societies, because of the massive differences between societies. The enormous gap between African societies and global dynamics generated elsewhere produces instability and tur-

<sup>1</sup> PTDC/AFR/104597/2008 funded by FCT, administrated by the Centre for African Studies at ISCTE-IUL in Lisbon and directed by Ulrich Schiefer. The project results are compiled in <https://africadynamics.wordpress.com/>

moil. These may either set off dynamics of development or of disintegration and collapse (Schiefer, 2002). But there is little knowledge about what links African societies to external dynamics and how these links operate. Our research tries to better understand these linkages and transmission mechanisms between external and internal factors of change, how they work, how they affect each other and what turmoil they can cause in African societies.

## **The perspective of flow analysis and the grey zone**

The relations between global dynamics and internal dynamics in African societies can be regarded from a perspective of flow analysis, as loose bundles of flows that interact with each other. These in-flows and out-flows of different origins, directions and rates are affected by bottlenecks and other interferences resulting from interaction between them, causing turmoil and other unexpected effects. These irregular, non-linear flows comprise energy, information, money, people, and material.

Global dynamics produce high-energy flows with a high rate of change, whilst flows in African societies, with the exception of violent conflicts, forced migration, etc., are usually, of low energy and slow change. They meet in a grey zone, where interactions are fuzzy and complex and produce ever-changing turmoil that engages the dynamics of society.

Research conducted at macro-level or micro-level often comes to very different conclusions and the various levels of analysis are seldom linked. The zone of confluence between the two, with its often invisible workings, is frequently neglected. It is therefore important to try to gain a better understanding of the complex interactions between global and internal dynamics in this grey confluence zone.

This research looks at this grey zone where different flows intersect. It is in this area of turmoil that flows influence each other and create unexpected outcomes, such as mutually reinforcing downward spirals with spill-over effects.

By looking at the whole picture while focusing on two (of many possible) important bundles of these flows, migration and food security, and their interaction with global dynamics, this research contributes to a model for dynamic processes of societal change unleashed when high energy societies interact with low energy societies.

## Migration flows and food (in)security

Food and migration are crucial flows, intertwined with and linked to many others. Rapid changes in parameters (e.g. food prices, migration policies) allow insights into their inner workings. Food security, a classic area of (mostly failed) development and humanitarian intervention is strongly affected by global trade and international food prices, with food insecurity being a cause for concern in many African regions. Migration shows growing outflows as well as inflows (remittances and re-migration) resulting in some cases in very dramatic situations. Food insecurity increases pressures on remittances and on the rural population, while global crises reduce chances and employment opportunities for migrants and incomes of successful migrants. Both flows therefore condition the survival and reproduction of African agrarian societies.

Migration comprises flows of people mostly from rural to urban areas, and to foreign countries and back. The flows of successful migration are counterbalanced by a flow of remittances that the migrants send to their families. These flows are affected by a growing number of failed migrations which create an overspill in cities and transit zones leading to particular turmoil. Food security involves food production and movement of foodstuffs from rural to urban areas through trade as well as in the opposite direction; the in-flows of food aid and food imports interact with outflows produced in agriculture often causing conflicts of interest and more turmoil.

Migration and food security are connected. One of the coping strategies in cases of food insecurity is migration, which further decreases the productive potential of agrarian society due to the loss of labour force. Successful migration attracts even more migrants, leading to accelerated movements. Due to migrant remittances, households no longer depend on agriculture to survive, which further decreases production. This, in turn, may encourage even more migration, leading into a spiral with various flows feeding into each other. Food security and migration have both been the target of external intervention giving rise to significant planned and unforeseen consequences, creating tensions and turmoil.

Both fields have undergone massive changes allowing the usually hidden parts of flows to become more visible (Castles, 2005). The research in this project analyses the interrelations between both fields, their relations with other important flows in African societies and their interaction with global dynamics. Analysing the problem from the perspective of flow dynamics consists of identifying and analysing the characteristics of migration and food security flows, how they interact, how they affect the areas and societies through which they pass. Through

this perspective we study societies within their external conditions but with their own dynamics, without reducing them to mere objects of intervention.

## Migration flows

Historically, migration was an established trait of Sub-Saharan African agrarian societies to solve or mitigate ecological, demographic, and political problems by re-allocating people in slowly changing productive contexts to guarantee their access to resources. But migration in Africa has not always had a peaceful history. African states faced strong in and outmigration partly as a consequence of armed conflicts and wars (including colonial wars) as well as labour migration that did not stop at national borders (Adepoju, 2008).

Forced migration introduced on a massive scale by centuries of slave trade diminished somewhat in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and took new forms in the 20<sup>th</sup>, especially in settler colonies where African populations were forced from the most productive lands. During the anticolonial and post-independence wars, forced migrations were quite frequent, leading to the establishment of refugee camps and accelerated urbanisation processes.

In the last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dramatic changes in external conditions – produced by the cumulative effects of international trade, development aid and humanitarian assistance, as well as religious, political and security/military intervention – influenced the internal dynamics of agrarian societies and induced strong rural-urban migration that concentrated more than half the population in urban centres.

These massive migrations have been conditions and consequences of fundamental changes in the internal dynamics of African societies. They are characterized by a decrease in production accompanied by a decline of intergenerational transfer of knowledge, values and norms and a decrease in food security and by population movements with increasing parts of the population cut off from agrarian production living in towns where, despite expectations to the contrary, they find no employment or income opportunities. The concentration of – mostly external – resources in urban centres have attracted people away from their productive contexts in agriculture and related areas into cities but they only find low-level secondary subsistence from the dissipative structures of a dissipative economy (Schiefer, 2002).

This fundamental population shift weakened the rural economies and increased external dependency by concentrating people in cities that transform and trade, but basically do not produce. This has been one the most important condi-

tions that changed the intended “developmental” dynamics of African societies into the downward spiral of disintegration and collapse which generated visible turmoil such as state disintegration, violent conflicts and forced migrations.

## Intercontinental migration

As a secondary phenomenon, intercontinental migration has also increased.

Although most migration still takes place within Africa, in past decades, the need for labour in European countries, forced migration and growing transcontinental links have led to the establishment of African migrant communities in Europe and elsewhere (Bocquier & Diarra, 1999; De Haas, 2008). However, nowadays, barriers are being erected to restrict these population movements.

Recently, two intertwined aspects fuelled a rising interest in African migration: European efforts to restrict irregular immigration from African countries and the observation that remittances to developing countries exceed official development aid (Ratha & Xu, 2008). Within policy discourse, both aspects are intermingled, though migration management is overarched by different, often contradictory interests of countries of origin, receiving countries, and the migrants themselves (Castles, 2008).

Migration from Africa to Europe, especially irregular migration, is overestimated (De Haas, 2008). Since the late nineties, the European Union and EU member states have taken measures to stem irregular migration from Africa (e.g. EU Council, 1999). Irregular migrants are blocked and returned. In addition, European states are increasing efforts to return irregular migrants from EU territory (e.g. EurActive, 2008) through readmission treaties as well as growing numbers of irregular migrants repatriated by force.

The widespread, violent breakdown of political structures in the Middle East and Northern Africa that served as subcontracted forward defences for “fortress Europe” has simultaneously increased migration pressures and reduced the barriers erected to curtail the flow of migrants from Africa to Europe.

Regular and irregular international migration from Africa to Europe has become increasingly difficult, expensive and dangerous. The effects of what can be called failed migration on migration goals and social developments in countries of origin have not yet been analysed. One outcome of growing difficulties in migration is that young men who stay at home have to cope with what Jonsson (2008) calls “involuntary immobility”. Another is a growing awareness of migration issues within African societies, turning the migration issue into a crux for the survival of governments (Bernard, 2008).

## Remittances

Remittances are the outcome and symbol of successful migration, though it is a label for many different forms of transfers (Carling, 2008). In many cases, remittances seem to be a strong motive to migrate, while in others, like forced migration, there still is the will and obligation to support family members back home.

Most remittances consist of “private” money, which means that it is not within the direct reach of government institutions. One of the effects is that countries of origin have tried to establish closer links to diaspora organisations, thus giving them higher importance.

Especially remittances, but also returns are often discussed in an almost euphoric manner as substantial support for developing countries (Castles, 2008; Kapur, 2004; Khalifa & Sheikha, 2006). The flow of money and experienced, skilled returnees enjoys high academic and political interest and is deemed to be of great value to countries of origin, though critical voices state that this might be a simplified view (Castles & Wise, 2008). The influx of remittances may create dependency, cause a decrease in agricultural production, foster inequality and decrease social cohesion, along with other negative impacts.

Research on remittances and returns raises more questions than answers. Though a growing number of economic surveys and qualitative studies try to shed light on the use of remittances and the value of returnees (Carling, 2008), they usually focus on the migration and development nexus and the broader effects of migration on African societies are rarely addressed.

## Food (in)security

Despite rapid urbanisation, a vast majority of Africans are still directly engaged in agriculture or connected in multiple ways to agrarian societies in rural areas.

Agriculture change is driven by internal drivers and strongly conditioned by the larger context of political and economic change. The dynamics of change in agrarian societies are accelerating and often negative. Societies, however, are resilient and over the centuries have developed internal solutions to the external pressures they face. One question is whether these societies still retain their capacity to resist and adapt or if they will disintegrate and collapse. And if they collapse, will they give rise to other productive structures in which the well-being of the population can be promoted or only to widespread poverty and food insecurity?



Livelihood dynamics are complex and when incorporated into global spheres of influence through trade and migration become ever more so (Batterbury, 2007). As a result, food security is equally a very complex phenomenon affected by external and internal dynamics. Global trade strongly affects food security. Food security is ensured basically through food production, distribution and access, a smaller part of which is guaranteed by subsistence economies though a large part is dependent on international markets (Temudo & Schiefer, 2004). Price distortions and fluctuations in international markets often have negative impacts on local production.

Food security is also a classic area of external aid and humanitarian intervention but these interventions mostly fail. The inflow of resources produces a dissipative economy rather than development (Schiefer, 2002; Milando, 2005).

Migration, on the other hand, has depleted labour stocks for agricultural production and this is compounded by the flows of remittances, which further disengage people from agriculture and make them dependent on this external source of income. Scarce funds are used to accelerate mobility, not to increase production, thereby increasing the risks of food insecurity.

Agrarian societies react, resist or adapt to these pressures or simply disintegrate. No single process model explains the diversity of the dynamics of such economies, which are as diverse as the societies with all their specific characteristics and local differences. There are many theoretical approaches to studying rural change including sustainable rural livelihood, agrarian political economy or new institutional economics as well as methodologies such dynamic vulnerability (Fairbairn et al., 2014; Hornborg, 2005; Grigg, 2002; Batterbury, 2007).

Livelihood strategies in agrarian societies to respond to pressures may include de-agrarianisation and diversification. These processes may involve internal migration (long or short-term separation of family members in order to ensure incomes), a reduction in the size of extended families, the weakening of dependency ties and thus greater autonomy within families (Scoones & Wolmer, 2002; De Haan & Zoomers, 2005). Even where systems appear vulnerable or unsustainable, adaptations to change still take place, through business activity or out-migration, intensification of production (Batterbury, 2007) or other strategies. Bryceson (2000) has identified multiple responses made by households under processes of de-agrarianisation and livelihood diversification.

However, despite a variety of coping strategies, i.e. the means by which African societies deal with food insecurity, famine and other pressure factors, these are already widely stretched to breaking point. The resilience of many of these societies has been partially eroded and coping strategies in production,

consumption and resource management, including migration, work only partially (Temudo & Schiefer, 2004).

Dynamic vulnerability looks at the extent to which rapid changes of socio-economic and environmental context influence the capacities of regions, sectors, ecosystems and social groups to respond to various types of natural and socio-economic shocks (Castells, 2008; Leichenko & O'Brien, 2002).

But the risk of food insecurity had already been clearly predicted by Dumont (1973, 1980a, 1980b) who was, however, widely ignored at the time. In fact food insecurity has increased in Africa since the 1970s. It threatens not only specific groups like poor rural households, urban poor and victims of conflict, but growing parts of all societies. Even farmers are often net buyers of food. Historical decreases in food prices have had dramatic negative impacts on producers for instance. On the other hand, recent rising famers may not benefit from increased food prices given difficulties in access to resources, labour and markets. In urban areas, food security resulting from price increases has caused social unrest, often in the form of riots.

Many African agrarian societies depend on external assistance, with its own negative consequences. External food aid increased in Africa, while it was decreasing in the rest of the world until the recent crises.

The pattern for these agrarian societies has been to weaken and collapse under the combined effects of market forces, political intervention, environmental change, and direct and brutal consequences of conflict. Few systematic studies of the social effect of these external dynamics upon African agrarian societies have been attempted.

## **Differences between African agrarian and Western industrialised societies and implications for research**

African (agrarian) societies differ significantly from the industrialised, Western societies where research still mostly originates. Therefore, many theoretical approaches are based on implicit assumptions that do not hold true for African societies. For example, African (agrarian) societies have not produced "the individual" in the same way as industrialized societies did: neither the process of individualisation nor individuation has taken the same route or reached the same results (Jung, 2001).

In African societies the social unit is not the individual but a reproductive (historically and ideally, productive) survival unit with stronger or weaker ties to other social units. The unit of analysis cannot, therefore, be the individual but

has to be an appropriate social unit, originally the “family”. This model is so ingrained that, even in foreign contexts, migrants tend to simulate the lineage model, even if this entails uneven economic transfers between different members. These social units include their dead members who function as invisible, but real, actors. The inner workings of these social units cannot be understood without their spiritual dimension. It is highly relevant that, in many African societies, migrants make contracts with the spirits before leaving. These contracts not only limit their behaviour in the host countries but also their decisions on how to proceed after their possible return. These observations weaken theories (namely migration theories) based on the concept of the individual, such as individual motivation, attitude or decision-making theories which are intra-individual psychological constructs. It also weakens the foundation of the network theories although these produce valuable knowledge.

The differences in behaviour of shame-based cultures, such as African or Asian, – which imply direct social relations within a reference group or with a specific public – in contact with guilt based cultures, such as Western European – which do not – cannot always be resolved within approaches such as “intercultural dialogue”.

The familiarity and trust produced in agrarian societies and often destroyed in urban settings or in societies traumatised by wars, civil strife, forced migration, famine, etc. (Schiefer, 2014) pose some very complex research questions. Trust in African societies includes ontological, transactional, interpersonal and relational (linguistic, ethnic, lineage, family) dimensions in societies. Outside “communities”, trust collapses and the hunter-prey relation gains strength.

In addition, African societies do not produce the perception of risk in the same way as industrialized societies. The seemingly high-risk endeavours of intercontinental migration – as well as apparent high-risk behaviour in host societies – can in essence be interpreted as the result of “diversification strategies” by their social units that feel compelled to send some of their members off into the largely unknown in order to improve their chances. Simultaneously, they can also be an expression of breakdown of social relations in traumatised societal units such as families, neighbourhoods or lineages.

Rising social tensions manifest themselves through the increase in latent and open conflicts which surpass the internal capacity for conflict management of the society and force their members to adopt evasion strategies. Often it is the apparent failure to fulfil their obligations to their group that causes the breakdown of social units that elicits shame on the potential migrant. Therefore men are usually the first to leave, as in collapsing social contexts, the mother-child dyad is the last relationship to break down.

When looking at migration flows, and, in particular, forced migrations that try to reach intercontinental destinations, researchers often deal with traumatised societies – that is to say not only traumatised “individuals” but traumatised social units of different sizes (on the side of the victims as well as on the side of the perpetrators). At individual and collective levels, international migration therefore usually begins with a failure or rupture and therefore it happens within the context of social and emotional turmoil rather than within a framework of “rational choices” or “opportunistic stratagems” that the concept of “strategy” seems to suggest. Theories of development, and the vast body of scientific knowledge produced from within the development paradigm, are not particularly useful in understanding processes of disintegration and collapse<sup>2</sup>.

Linear causal models do not work in collapsing societies with accelerating disintegration dynamics. Even multifactor models are not adequate as they imply cause-effect relations that cannot be ascertained in collapsing critical subsystems. Neither do statistical models using large numbers, given that data are ever harder to collect and in most cases manipulated. In African societies most “hard data”, including demographic basics, but even economic data like income or expenditure, when in contact with instances of modern power, are a matter of negotiation. Data production in Africa is subject to strong pressures from international agencies as well as of governments whose interests are directly linked to the material and financial flows they try to justify by their reports.

A qualitative approach, based on conditions and consequence, seems therefore more appropriate for studying highly unstable, collapsing non-linear complex systems, than a cause-effect approach. Our approach does not regard societies as systems, though we can draw on systems theory for some peri-modern systems in African societies. This approach has to take into account long-term as well as short-term and rapid developments whose visibility often conceals slower underlying changes.

The current theories of development, and humanitarian and security intervention, with their associated methodologies, provide filters of perception for researchers and intervention actors. As they supposedly have a universal approach, they reduce the complexity of the “target” societies relegating them to “objects of intervention”, the discourses of participation notwithstanding<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wöhlcke’s interesting study on social entropy (Wöhlcke, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> They also serve to shield researchers from the often harsh realities they are dealing with. One of the most difficult methodological problems seems to be to adapt the aperture of perception in field research to a level that permits an understanding of the societies studied without jeopardising the existential integrity of the researcher.

The problem should therefore be addressed from an interdisciplinary approach that will grasp the complexity of the dynamics of change including change in external conditions produced by interventions and the internal dynamics of African societies. Working within this broad theoretical and analytical framework we are guided by several questions. How do these dynamics (slow and fast) of disintegration and collapse of peri-modern institutions and societies, both rural and urban, operate on the reproductive social units? How do these social units relate to other social, political and economic units? How do they mobilise external resources of all kinds (economic, relational, knowledge, spiritual power, political power, etc.) with ever diminishing results? How do their inner workings produce conditions for some of their members to embark on national, international and intercontinental migrations? How do social units “take decisions”? Where do they get information from and how do they operate on the emotional, societal and spiritual level that is constitutive for them? How do religious dimensions interact with these levels?

In short, the research is trying to develop a theoretical framework to study dynamic interaction zones and gain a better understanding of positive and negative spirals that form when different types of flows interact. This approach permits us to analyse decision making without recourse to logic or rational decision making models that may not apply in dynamics of disintegration.

We adopt a comprehensive approach to societal dynamics, as opposed to a sector approach, with the aim of studying the cumulative diachronic and synchronic effects of multiple external drivers of change on African societies. To understand the mechanisms of the “meso-level”, the research looks at a set of dimensions of change as loose bundles of interacting flows, creating interferences and turmoil. Our approach perceives these non-linear relations as dynamic, recursive and interdependent.

## The case-studies

The *Dynamics* project brought together a very diverse group of researchers who approached the research questions from different perspectives based on their interests and fields of knowledge. They were guided by a shared understanding of the theoretical framework and methodology built through a series of internal discussions and workshops with invited researchers. The work was based on case studies conducted in Mali, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) and Cape Verde (CV). For each case study the researchers used specific methods to identify and investigate external and internal dynamics, impacts

of drivers of change and interaction amongst them in order to address several of the research questions. This research has resulted in a large number of articles and papers, each shedding light on different aspects of the key questions. A selection of these is presented in this thematic issue which comprises the papers presented at the CIEA8.

Lúcia Bayan is a PhD researcher in African Studies and has conducted field research about the *felupe* (a sub-group of the Joola ethnic group), an agrarian society in North West Guinea-Bissau and South of Senegal. Bayan places the *felupe* society at the centre of her analysis. Her research is based on an in-depth analysis and understanding of the specific characteristics and internal dynamics of this society. Most of her work was on the influence of external dynamics on power structures within the *felupe* society which she studied through participant observation and informal conversation with *régulos* and religious leaders (representatives of the traditional authority) and *comités* (representatives of state authority).

She also explored other dimensions of the links between global contemporary changes and internal change in this small agrarian society in Guinea-Bissau. She focused on how changes in international food prices, climate change and migration related to internal changes in the *felupe* society and concluded that these dynamics exerted strong pressure on the reproductive and productive capacity of this agrarian society. The question remains whether these pressures will lead to transformative processes or if these societies will face disintegration.

The paper contributes to a better understanding of the *felupe* society and the potential for transformation of small agrarian societies in Africa.

Albert Farré is a researcher with a background in history and social anthropology and has been working in Mozambique since 1999. Although he was not engaged directly with the project, his research addresses many of the same concerns. In his paper he sets out to demonstrate how the south of Mozambique shifted from food exporting to food dependency and insecurity and how this shift is related to mobility and migration.

In the south of Mozambique, production systems were extremely diversified and based on activities that required high mobility. Women, in particular, who had been traditionally in charge of food production, had a diversified production system. They had plots of land in different areas to minimise risk, based on a variety of different crops and processing produce into drinks and oil. This wide range of produce required ample mobility, as mobility and diversification were the ingredients that ensured food security.

Successive external interventions, from colonial rule to post-war policies, placed increasingly harsh constraints on these productive strategies by restricting

movement and access to land, leading to the progressive degradation of women's social position and a decrease in revenues from production. On the other hand they fostered male migration to the mines in South Africa which led to increased dependency on remittances from migrant husbands for the social reproduction of the family. These pressures eroded the control women had over their food production and marketing systems and led to an increase in food insecurity.

Farré challenges the dominant vision of agriculture in southern Mozambique as subsistence agriculture that stills prevails nowadays, despite the evidence demonstrating that women have always been engaged in market activities to adapt to a variety of external pressures. He argues that this simplification of the complex reality of rural lives hinders the analysis of changes that occur.

Farré addresses, in a variety of ways, key issues that were raised by the project by linking the rise of food insecurity in the south of Mozambique with external dynamics, internal mobility and migration, from an historical perspective.

Three researchers, Philipp Jung, Manuela Cardoso and Victor Reis conducted research in Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe. These are two small island states with very different development paths and in which the flows of external intervention, migration and food security play out in very different ways.

In Cape Verde emigration flows have historically been a central aspect of social and economic life and continue to be crucial now. Through their remittances and also through non-monetary flows such as knowledge and technology transfer, emigration movements have had deep impacts on the dynamics of society. Remittances have improved family income and living conditions through increased access to health, education and small capital investments. Remittances and technical knowledge transfers from migration, together with government policy and external aid, have changed agricultural production systems, thereby increasing levels of food security. However rural populations are still very vulnerable to climate, international food prices and variation in remittances levels, amongst other factors. Nowadays Cape Verde is also becoming a destination for migration from mainland Africa, the effects of which are still under-analysed.

Historically, São Tomé and Príncipe was more a country of (even forced) immigration. During the colonial period, immigrants worked in the *roças*, large private enterprises producing cacao and coffee. More recently, as a result of structural changes in the economy and social system there has been an increase in emigration especially of young people who leave to study abroad and do not return. Family ties are also less strong than in Cape Verde and so are remittance levels. Despite favourable conditions for agriculture and fishing, the level of food insecurity is high.



Manuela Cardoso worked on the Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe case studies where she has extensive field research experience. The aim of her research was to better understand the links between external dynamics, migration processes, food security and local social dynamics in these two island states and compare and contrast what is happening in each of them. She produced several papers addressing the problem from different angles.

Through extensive interviews conducted in STP she tried to achieve a better understanding of the “grey zone” of turmoil between rural and urban areas, between rural producers and the market and between them and international development aid actors and projects. She described a grey zone of turmoil between external aid, and mostly unsustainable projects and the rural poor. Many aid projects are directed at agriculture, the main activity of poor people. However, due to the lack of technical training and project appropriation, these have very little impact on production and benefits for the rural poor. Instead they benefit the project promoters and public entities through wages and commissions.

The field work also allowed Cardoso to conclude that in São Tomé and Príncipe food security is not linked to remittances. Resilience in times of crisis can be built up through diversification of incomes, but the lack of a consistent strategy for agricultural development, the inexistence of a conservation strategy and unclear land redistribution processes explain the levels of food insecurity.

In this thematic issue, she analyses the relationship between migration and food security. She contrasts the situation in Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe which, though they share some similarities in terms of their political path to independence, thereafter show very different outcomes in terms of development. She first identifies some commonalities between these two small island states and discusses how the interactions between territorial, economic, political and social cultural factors have shaped different development paths.

The research contributed to a better understanding of the linkages between migration, food security and international aid, especially in small island economies.

Victor Reis has extensive experience of research in Cape Verde where he analysed development strategies after independence and their impacts on society. He identified a wide range of interactions between external dynamics and local social dynamics especially after democratisation and market liberalisation in 1991. During the *Dynamics* project, his research looked in particular at food insecurity in Cape Verde and its relationship with external dynamics.

Due to climatic conditions that are highly adverse to agriculture, Cape Verde is greatly dependent on food imports. It was therefore important to investigate



the social and economic impacts of international food price crises. His research revealed some level of resilience to price variation and set out to identify possible reasons for this. At national level, resilience is related to long-term agriculture development policies, infrastructure, monitoring policies and control of food stocks. At family level, he identified diversification of agricultural production, the introduction of transformation of certain products and migrant remittances as key factors of resilience.

Philipp Jung was a researcher of the *Dynamics* project and conducted field work in Cape Verde and Senegal focusing on migration and remittance flows. Cape Verde is usually regarded and studied as a place of origin of migrants. However, it has become an increasingly important destination for migrants from West Africa. In his work, Jung analysed the flow of migration of Senegalese to the island of Boa Vista and the counter-current of remittances back to Senegal. He researched motivations for migration from Senegal to Cape Verde and decision-making processes, the impact of the migrants' presence in Boa Vista, their working and living conditions and how they affected their capacity to send remittances. He studied the impacts of this migration on the social structures in the place of origin and also on food security.

From his empirical analyses he examines whether migration is also driven by individual aspirations as well as family decisions.

Jung studied migration as a flow linking the migrants' place of origin and place of arrival and explored the potential turmoil that this flow caused in the two locations.

The results presented in this thematic issue highlight some of the ways in which the authors have addressed the key issues that were raised by the project *Dynamics* and how they tried to link external dynamics, including political models, policies, price fluctuation and aid with food security, migration and other kinds of mobility and internal societal dynamics. We hope that this research has helped to show how all these dynamics are interrelated and that some of the assumptions about external intervention as linear causal models are too simplistic. They should rather be seen as complex interventions which may lead to unforeseen effects and turmoil. International interest, for instance, in linking (agricultural) development to restricted migration is an idea with many unknown variables as migration may improve development and development may encourage migration. Further research on these topics will be of crucial importance to a better understanding of African societies and how to promote meaningful transformation processes.

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